

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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R 142344Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3540
INFO AMCONSUL BELIZE
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 11742

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, GT, BH, UK, MX
SUBJECT: MEXICAN PERCEPTIONS OF THE BELIZE SITUATION

1. CURRENT MEXICAN ATTITUDE, BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE,
TOWARD THE BELIZE SITUATION CAN BE DESCRIBED AS ONE OF
HEIGHTENED BUT DETACHED INTEREST.

2. THE BRITISH EMBASSY EXPRESSED TO EMBOFFS ITS SATISFAC-
TION WITH THE CONVERGENCE OF THE MEXICAN AND BRITISH
POSITIONS ON THE BELIZE ISSUE. WHEN SOME GOM OFFICIALS
MADE FAINT REFERENCE IN PAST TWO WEEKS TO A POSSIBLE
TERRITORIAL CONCESSION UP TO THE MONKEY RIVER, THE BRITISH
AMBASSADOR QUESTIONED FONSEC ROEL AND WAS ONCE AGAIN AS-
SURED THAT MEXICO SUPPORTS FULL SELF-DETERMINATION AND
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY FOR BELIZE. (WITHOUT RENOUNCING ITS
OWN CLAIM TO TERRITORY SHOULD THERE BE SOME AGREEMENT
BETWEEN GUATEMALA AND THE U.K., MEXICO HAS DISPLAYED A
PASSIVE ATTITUDE SO FAR, AND WE ANTICIPATE ITS CONTINU-
ANCE.)

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3. ALUSNA HAS HEARD UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT A CERTAIN
SMALL NUMBER OF MEXICAN MARINES HAVE MOVED WITHIN THE
YUCATAN AREA INTO THE AREA BORDERING BELIZE, AND INTO THE
NAVAL ZONE AT PUERTO MADERO ON THE PACIFIC. THE MEXICAN
SECRETARY OF NAVY ANNOUNCED ON JULY 11 THAT NAVAL UNITS
WOULD INCREASE THEIR PATROL OF A 10-MILE BUFFER ZONE OFF
THE MEXICAN-GUATEMALAN PACIFIC BORDER. (THIS BUFFER ZONE

HAS BEEN IN EFFECT FOR TEN YEARS SINCE BOTH NATIONS EXPANDED THEIR TERRITORIAL SEAS TO TWELVE MILES.) NEITHER MILITARY MOVE IS CONSIDERED TO BE MORE THAN AN ELEMENTARY PRECAUTION AGAINST THE REMOTE POSSIBILITY OF A FLARE-UP ALONG THE BORDER AREA. THE NAVY SECRETARY'S STATEMENT IS DESIGNED MORE TO PROVE HIS SERVICE IS "SEMPER PARATUS" THAN TO COUNTER ANY ACTUAL THREAT. DAO OFFICE WILL BE SENDING AN IR WITH FURTHER DETAILS. IN CONJUNCTION WITH ABOVE STATEMENT/REPORT, ALUSNA HAS REQUESTED VISIT TO PUERTO MADERO NAVAL BASE FOR 19 JULY.

4. THERE IS INCREASED COMMENT IN THE PRESS ABOUT THE BELIZE SITUATION, AND EXCELSIOR HAS BEEN FRONT-PAGING ARTICLES BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT ON THE OPPOSITION IN BELIZE. HOWEVER, SINCE THE GUATEMALANS HAD SHOWN NO INTEREST IN A MEXICAN MEDIATION ROLE IN THE CONFLICT, MEXICAN OFFICIALS HAVE KEPT TO A MINIMUM ANY PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE CRISIS.

5. THE GUATEMALAN EMBASSY HERE, WHILE EXPRESSING ITS DISAGREEMENT WITH MEXICO'S POSITION RE BELIZE, DOES NOT CONSIDER THAT MEXICO IS INTERFERING A LA PANAMA IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF GUATEMALA. THUS CONTACTS WITH THE GOM HAVE REMAINED NORMAL.

6. FYI: THE BRITISH EMBASSY INFORMED EMBOFF THAT ROWLANDS
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WILL MAKE A STOP IN MEXICO BEFORE OR AFTER HIS "GOODWILL" VISIT TO GUATEMALA; NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT HAS BEEN MADE YET. LUCEY

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